Claims

What is claimed is:

1. Method for handling E-mail messages in a communication system comprising one or several intermediate receivers (102), each serving at least one recipient, the method comprising:

detaching, in the intermediate receiver (102), any attachment (300) in an E-mail message and storing the attachment,

replacing each attachment in the E-mail message (10) with a reference (400) to the stored attachment, and

forwarding the E-mail message (10) with the reference (400) from the intermediate receiver (102) to the recipient specified in the E-mail message (10).

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the detaching comprises:

copying the at least one attachment (300) to an attachment database (105) accessible to all intermediate receivers (102) at a receiving side (100).

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

defining access conditions such that the stored attachment (300) is accessable for each recipient of the according reference (400).

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the attachment is replaced with multiple references to multiple versions of the attachment.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

upon an according request of the recipient, transferring the stored attachment to the recipient.

6. System for handling E-mail messages in a communication system, comprising one or more intermediate receivers (102), each serving at least one recipient, the intermediate receiver (102) comprising an attachment handling device (104) adapted for

detaching any attachment (300) in an E-mail message (10) and storing the attachment (300),

replacing each attachment (300) in the E-mail message (10) with a reference (400) to the stored attachment, and

forwarding the E-mail message (10) with the reference (400) from the intermediate receiver (102) to the recipient specified in the E-mail message (10).

7. The system of claim 6, further comprising a first attachment database (105) accessable to all intermediate receivers (102) at a receiving side (100) and connectable to the attachment handling device (104).

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the first attachment database (105) is located at the intermediate receiver (102).

9. The system of claim 7, further comprising for at least one of the recipients an attachment copy device (111) adapted for transferring the stored attachment from the first attachment database (105) to the recipient.

10. The system of claim 7, further comprising a second attachment database (112) connectable to the attachment copy device (111).

11. The system of claim 6, wherein the intermediate receiver (102) is a server in a client-server architecture, serving at least one recipient's client (110).

12. The system of claim 10, wherein the second attachment database (112) is located at the recipient's client (110).

13. The system of claim 11, wherein the second attachment database (112) is located at the recipient's client (110).

14. Computer program product directly loadable into the internal memory of a computer, comprising software code portions for performing the steps of claim 1 when said product is run on a computer.

15. Computer system comprising an internal memory, wherein the computer program product of claim 14 is loaded, and an execution environment for executing a method of handling E-mail messages in a communication system comprising one or several intermediate receivers (102), each serving at least one recipient, the method comprising:

detaching, in the intermediate receiver (102), any attachment (300) in an E-mail message and storing the attachment,

replacing each attachment in the E-mail message (10) with a reference (400) to the stored attachment, and

forwarding the E-mail message (10) with the reference (400) from the intermediate receiver (102) to the recipient specified in the E-mail message (10).

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